

REMARKS

Applicants have now had an opportunity to carefully consider the Examiner's comments set forth in the Office Action of June 28, 2005.

Reconsideration of the Application is requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-17 remain in this application.

The Office Action

In the Office Action, claims 10, 15, and 16 were allowed.

Claims 2-4 were objected to, but considered to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1, 5, and 17 stand rejected under 35 USC§103(a) as being unpatentable over Casaldi, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,779,578) in view of Murooka, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,467,884).

Claims 6-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Casaldi, et al. in view of Murooka, et al. and further in view of Kerr, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,640,866).

For the reasons outlined below, it is submitted that all claims are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 recites a laminator which includes an inlet tray and an outlet tray pivotally connected to a housing which are movable between an operative position and a raised position, in which the trays extend upwardly, adjacent opposed sides of the housing. In the operative position, the outlet tray is positioned to receive the laminated item from the outlet slot.

Murooka discloses an ink jet printer with an automatic supply section M3022 which feeds paper to the printer and a discharge tray M1004. The discharge tray is pivotable. The automatic supply section, however, is fixed.

Casaldi, et al. discloses a master processing apparatus 10 with a feed tray 96, which has an inoperative position, illustrated in FIGURE 1, and an operative position, shown in FIGURE 7. A discharge side of the apparatus has a support structure 100, which moves from an operative position, shown in FIGURES 7-10, to an inoperative position, covering the discharge slot, shown in FIGURES 2, 4, and 5.

In the operative position, the support structure of Casaldi extends under the apparatus to the side of the apparatus on which the inlet 42 is located. It does not serve as an outlet tray, as the Examiner contends.

The Examiner takes the position that it would be obvious to employ a discharge tray, as taught by Murooka, in the apparatus of Casaldi. In the Examiner's opinion, a pivoting discharge tray would provide a convenient location to collect the finished sheet materials while occupying less space and closing the device from dust and dirt when in the closed position. However, the motivation for the combination is lacking. First, the device of Casaldi already has a cover for the discharge opening 44 in the form of support structure 100. There is thus no advantage to adding Murooka's discharge tray for avoiding dust. Second, replacing Casaldi's support structure with a discharge tray such as that of Murooka would defeat the object of Casaldi, which is to provide a support structure for when the machine is in use. Third, the Examiner's suggestion that the discharge tray be used to collect the finished sheet materials is, in our opinion, inapplicable to a device, such as Casaldi's, which is used for laminating a master. There is no continuous or automated feed of masters into and out of the device as there is with the feeding of sheets of paper in a printing system. Each master is separately fed into the machine. Fourth, each master is advanced by manually pulling on the free ends of the stock materials 16, 18, extending from the discharge opening 44 of Casaldi's device (col. 5, lines 10-15). Since an operator uses the hands to pull the laminated master from the machine, there is no advantage to providing a tray. Fifth, the tray, if positioned to receive the laminated master, would impede the user's ability to grasp the exiting master. Sixth, having pulled the laminated master out of the machine, there would be no motivation for a user to return it to a tray by the discharge opening. Finally, if a second master were to be laminated, the thick, multilayer master sitting on the tray would further impede the ability of the operator to grasp the exiting second master.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the motivation to combine Casaldi with Murooka is lacking.

Kerr, et al., which is cited against claims 5 and 9, discloses a laminator assembly having an entrance table 20 and an exit table 30. There is no suggestion in Kerr that these trays be movable to an upright position.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1 and claims 2-9 dependent therefrom, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 17 recites a method for laminating which includes lowering inlet and outlet trays of a laminator into an operational position adjacent respective inlet and outlet slots of a housing of the laminator, positioning an item to be laminated on the inlet tray and feeding the item through the laminator housing, receiving the laminated item on the outlet tray, and raising the trays to a storage position, in which the trays extend upwardly, adjacent opposed sides of the housing.

There is no motivation for the combination of Murooka with Casaldi. As the Examiner acknowledges, Casaldi does not disclose receiving a laminated item on an outlet tray. The structure 100 of Casaldi does not serve as a tray, as the Examiner contends. Further, as discussed for claim 1, there is no motivation for combining Murooka with Casaldi.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 17 distinguishes patentably and unobviously over the references of record.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons detailed above, it is submitted all claims remaining in the application (Claims 1-17) are now in condition for allowance. The foregoing comments do not require unnecessary additional search or examination.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he is hereby authorized to call the undersigned, at Telephone Number (216) 861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

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